

March 2009

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Breaking the Silence and Breaking the Stigma at March Education Meeting

Dr. Otto Wahl of the University of Hartford will be the speaker for the March Education meeting. Dr. Wahl will be in Columbia as part of a study of the *Breaking the Silence* program at Longleaf Middle School. Dr. Wahl's major areas of research interest are in public perceptions of mental illnesses, mental illness stigma, and mass media depictions of mental illness. For more information about Dr. Wahl and his research, visit his website at uhaweb.hartford.edu/owahl.

Join us Tuesday, March 9, at 6 pm in the parlor of Trenholm Road United Methodist Church.

Special Event at USC on March 4

Ross Szabo will speak at a special program at 7pm on March 4 in the Russell House Ballroom at USC. Ross is currently the Director of Youth Outreach for the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign (NMHAC) and began speaking about mental health at age 17. In the last six years, he has spoken to over half a million young people in high schools and colleges about mental health issues. He has been featured in *Parade* and *Seventeen* magazines, appeared on CNN, MTV and CBS and had his presentation turned into a television program for PBS. Please join NAMI and USC staff and students at this free event.

President's Letter

By Buddy Wier

NAMI Mid-Carolina is making a difference in our community by providing education, support, and advocacy to improve the lives of those with mental illness and their families. I expect everyone is gearing up for the 2009 NAMIWALKS for the Mind of America here in Columbia on April 25th. Have you visited the WALK website? www.nami.org/namiwalks/SC/Columbia

It would be understandable to think of the WALK as a one day event. However, our experience is that the WALK is much more than that. The carryover of increased awareness about mental illness, NAMI, and expanded community contacts is opening many doors to help those we serve. The facts below make the point that the WALK is actually much, much more than just a one day event.

During the week of February 8th, NAMI's 12-week *Family-to-Family* course began with 21 people registered. Seventy people attended NAMI's Education meeting about Schizophrenia, and 50 people attended a "Lunch and Learn" at Three Rivers Behavioral Health, where NAMI members provided the program. Eighty people attended the Five Points Rotary Club for a program on fighting the stigma of mental illness. And we offered four Connections Support Group meetings that week.

Think about these numbers. Almost 250 people were exposed to ideas about helping those with mental illness get the treatment they need. This may have been an exceptional week, but these events would not have happened without the combination of the fine programs NAMI offers and the awareness raised by NAMIWALKS.

These numbers are exciting, but we know that there is still a lot to be done. I hope you will tell others you know about the services NAMI offers. Should the employees in your business, your Sunday school class, your civic club, your garden club, and others learn more about mental illness and NAMI? NAMI volunteers would like to present a program for you.

Please invite your family members, friends, and business associates to join NAMI and participate in NAMIWALKS. The WALK is truly the door opener and ladder to raising awareness and is "NOT...just another walk".





2009 Information Sheet

Saturday, April 25, 2009

West Columbia Riverwalk Park

Check-In 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Walk Start Time 9:00 AM

Distance 5 Kilometers

- NAMIWALKS for the Mind of America is a nationwide fundraising and mental health awareness program held in nearly 90 communities around the country. These walks raise awareness, fight Stigma, and increase resources to support NAMI's programs and services.
- To form a team, walk with a team or make a donation, register at www.nami.org/NAMIWALKS/SC/Columbia; or you may register by mail NAMI: Mid-Carolina NAMIWALKS, P.O. Box 2526, Columbia, SC 29202. NAMI Mid-Carolina is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Donations are tax deductible.
- There is no walker registration fee for the Walk. All participants are encouraged to collect donations from family members, friends, co-workers and business associates in support of their participation in the Walk. Sign up at www.nami.org/NAMIWALKS/SC/Columbia.
- All proceeds from the Walk are used to fund NAMI's programs. These programs include support, education, and advocacy involving Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Panic Disorder, Schizophrenia, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and Borderline Personality Disorder
- All walkers that raise \$100 or more will receive a NAMIWALKS for the Mind of America event T-shirt.
- NAMIWALKS for the Mind of America is a rain or shine event.
- There is a wide-range of corporate sponsorship opportunities available to local companies and businesses relating to the Walk. Anyone interested in information on how his or her company or organization can sponsor the Walk should contact Joel "Buddy" Wier by calling 776-9548 or 528-1923 or by emailing wieriii@att.net.



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www.nami.org/NAMIWALKS/SC/Columbia

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a chronic, severe, and disabling brain disorder that has been recognized throughout recorded history. It affects about one percent of Americans.

People with schizophrenia may hear voices other people don't hear or they may believe that others are reading their minds, controlling their thoughts, or plotting to harm them.

People with schizophrenia may not make sense when they talk, may sit for hours without moving or talking much.

Available treatments can relieve many of the disorder's symptoms, but most people who have schizophrenia must cope with some residual symptoms as long as they live.

Nevertheless, this is a time of hope for people with schizophrenia and their families.

Many people with the disorder now lead rewarding and meaningful lives in their communities. Researchers are developing more effective medications and use research tools to understand the causes and to find ways to prevent and treat it.

(Material taken from National Institute of Mental Health publication "Schizophrenia." Copies are available from Mental Health America of South Carolina.)

What are the Symptoms of Schizophrenia?

1. **Positive symptoms** are unusual thoughts or perceptions, including hallucinations, delusions, thought disorder, and disorders of movement.
2. **Negative symptoms** represent a loss or a decrease in the ability to initiate plans, speak, express emotion, or find pleasure in everyday life. These symptoms are harder to recognize as part of the disorder and can be mistaken for laziness or depression.
3. **Cognitive symptoms** are problems with attention, certain types of memory, and the executive functions that allow us to plan and organize. Cognitive deficits can also be difficult to recognize as part of the disorder but are the most disabling in terms of leading a normal life.

Glenn Close Receives AARP Inspire Award For Her Advocacy



A long-time advocate to mental health due to her intimate experiences with one family member who has bipolar disorder and another who has schizoaffective disorder, Close has made a "risky" decision to head a national advertising campaign intended to diminish the stigma of mental illness. The campaign will represent the face of the three most

common mental health disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

Her sensibility to human frailty has been heightened from watching her mentally ill relatives struggle with addiction, cope with treatment costs, and deal with the side effects of their medications. What has troubled Close the most, though, was witnessing the excruciating isolation they experienced. "There was a big part of me that wanted to get into the trenches."

(For more information, visit www.aarpmagazine.org/people/inspire_awards_2009)

New and Renewing Members

Ann P. Blencowe

Barbara Callan

Sallie Clark

Marsha Teague

Dorothy & Leslie Whitley

Lugenia E. Caldwell

Bruce & Vicki Cannon

Dr. & Mrs. Philip Levin

Faye Wagner

General Donations

Bruce & Vicki Cannon

Sallie Clark

In Memory of Alex Wier (through 2/11/09)

Pat & Bob Bank

David & Cathy Fitzgerald

Dale & Cherrie Hamrick

Frank & Stephanie Mancuso

Judy Noffsinger

Lugenia E. Caldwell

John & Karen Grady

NAMI Laurens County

Doug Neal (The Neal Firm)

Charlie & Susan Speight

You can also view the Brain Storm
at www.namimidcarolina.org

Mondays 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30
6 pm NAMI Connection, Bridges
Clubhouse, 2015 Commerce Dr.
Cayce

Tuesdays 3/3, 3/17, 3/24, 3/31
6pm NAMI Connection, Trenholm
Rd. United Methodist Church
(TRUMC), 3401 Trenholm Rd.

Wednesday 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25
3 pm NAMI Connection, Dorn VA
Bldg 106, Room A-237

Wednesday, 3/4 7 pm
Mental Health event, Russell House
Ballroom, USC (see story pg. 1)

Thursdays 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26
6 pm NAMI Connections, TRUMC

Monday, 3/9, 12 noon
Team Captain Kick-Off Luncheon

Tuesday 3/10 6 pm Education
Meeting, TRUMC (see story pg. 1)

Saturday, April 25, 2009
NAMIWALKS for the Mind of
America, West Columbia Riverwalk



Calling all Potential Team Captains!

Team Captains and their guests are invited to a Team Captain Kick Off Luncheon on Monday, March 9, at noon. The event is sponsored by Long's Drugstores. If you haven't already done so, go online to form a team. Go to www.nami.org and click on **sign-in**.

Fill out the required information to complete your profile, making sure to write down your username and password somewhere you will remember. Click on **Submit**, and this will take you back to the nami.org home page.

On the left, click on the NAMIWalks logo, then click on the map and find the Columbia, SC Walk. See the Walk with Us box and click **Form a Walk Team**. Click on **Register Online Now** and fill out the information about your team, finishing by clicking **Register and Proceed** at the bottom. Then click **Create Team Page** and **Continue**.

Next, create your personal walker page in the same manner. Then click **Create My Walker Page** and **Finish**.

The last important step is to print the Confirmation screen that lists the event details and the address to your team and walker pages. You will be given a packet at the luncheon (or it will be mailed to you if you cannot attend) that contains more information and posters to help with recruiting team members. Thank you for your help and support!